

Strong & Livable Communities in Appalachia

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD) are combining resources to work with Appalachian small towns and rural communities that face development-related challenges.

This partnership aims to assist Appalachia to promote economic development and preserve the rural landscape while helping existing places to thrive and improving the quality of life for Appalachia residents.

Through direct technical support, regional workshops, and targeted training, Appalachian communities will benefit from opportunities to:

- Promote rural prosperity by creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands, preserves natural resources, and increases economic opportunities for all residents;
- Support vibrant, thriving and distinctive rural communities by investing in rural town centers, Main Streets, and existing infrastructure to create places that are vibrant, healthy, safe, and walkable;
- Expand transportation choices by creating communities where everyone - including elderly, disabled, and low-income residents - can conveniently, affordably, and safely access local and regional goods and services;
- Expand affordable housing by creating communities where everyone - including elderly, disabled, and low-income residents - can afford housing and transportation expenses.

ARC, EPA, and USDA RD will be coordinating efforts with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and the Development Districts Association of Appalachia (DDAA). Federal partners are committing \$200,000 to the new partnership, with additional in-kind resources.

Opportunities for Appalachian communities include:

- Direct technical assistance for a pilot group of small towns and rural communities to develop strategies and implementation measures that promote economic growth and safeguard air, water, and rural landscapes;
- Regional workshops, conducted in collaboration with NADO and the DDAA, for rural development officials and rural community leaders to learn how to put sustainable communities strategies to use;
- Targeted training for state, regional, and local development offices and organizations, in coordination with USDA and NADO, and building on the USDA Stronger Economies Together (SET) economic training initiative.

Efforts through Sustainable Communities in Appalachia will support the Partnership for

Sustainable Communities, a collaboration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make communities more prosperous, allow people to live closer to jobs, save households time and money, and reduce pollution. The Sustainable Communities in Appalachia partnership will draw on the goals and strategies described in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities 2011 publication [Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities](http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/2011_11_supporting-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf), available at http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/2011_11_supporting-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf.

Small towns and rural communities in the ARC-defined Appalachia region that would like to receive direct assistance to build a strong and livable community are invited to submit a letter of interest to ARC and EPA by March 15, 2012. For details on how to apply, contact Greg Faulkner at gfaulkner@arc.gov.